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[redacted]
Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D. C. 20505

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25 SEP 1986

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The Honorable Louis Stokes
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Stokes:

Enclosed is a short paper that addresses questions you raised concerning South African support for UNITA during my briefing of HPSCI on 16 September. As I indicated during the briefing, South Africa undoubtedly is UNITA's largest and most important source of military and financial assistance. We, however, remain unable to accurately estimate the dollar value of this support because we lack sufficient evidence on the specifics of the assistance provided. [redacted]

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As always, we stand ready to respond to any other questions you may have. [redacted]

Sincerely,

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[redacted]

John L. Helgeson
Associate Deputy Director for Intelligence

Enclosure

~~SECRET~~

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24 September 1986

MEMORANDUM**SUBJECT: South Africa: Support for UNITA****Political Dimension**

1. UNITA receives most of its outside support from or through South Africa which has been Savimbi's longest and most steadfast supporter. [redacted]

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-- Pretoria admitted publicly last year that it was providing material, humanitarian, and moral support to UNITA. South Africa's commitment to Savimbi was underscored when it risked irreplaceable fighter aircraft in combat missions against Angolan forces that threatened UNITA in the 1985 major offensive. [redacted]

25X1

-- [redacted] South African officials profess deep attachment to Savimbi who they hold up as a model of the "new" African leader. Pretoria's support for him also reflects [redacted] UNITA's utility to disrupt Angola and to keep Luanda and its Communist backers too preoccupied to effectively challenge South Africa on Namibia. [redacted]

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-- Savimbi is aware of the political disadvantages of his ties to South Africa, but has made no effort in recent years to deny them, arguing that military necessity leaves him no choice. We believe that, should Savimbi come to power, he would move to distance himself from Pretoria --at least ostensibly-- to gain respectability among his African peers. [redacted]

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Military Assistance

2. Although South Africa's links to Savimbi date from the 1975-76 civil war period, we believe that Pretoria escalated its military support in the early 1980's after UNITA had demonstrated growing potential. We believe that Pretoria's [redacted]

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[redacted] assistance [redacted] over the years has allowed UNITA to expand its area of operations and intensify the scope of its military challenge to the MPLA government. [redacted]

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3. Pretoria, in our view, stepped up its support to UNITA during the government offensive against the insurgents last year.

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4. Moreover, we believe that Pretoria is prepared to directly intervene again in the fighting if Savimbi requires assistance. Pretoria, however, probably will pick the place and occasion carefully to safeguard its irreplaceable air assets in the face of the improved, Soviet-supplied and Cuban-assisted, Angolan force. In our view, Pretoria's willingness to intervene increases the possibility of a direct confrontation with Angola's Soviet and Cuban patrons. [REDACTED]

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Value of Assistance

5. South Africa is by far the largest and most important source of military and financial assistance to UNITA, although we do not know the full dollar value of Pretoria's aid. UNITA is not totally dependent on South Africa's support. The insurgents produce much of their own food in organized agricultural enterprises, perform vehicle, equipment maintenance and repair in their own machine shops, probably capture at least half of their weapons from government forces, and earn hard currency through trade in diamonds, timber, and ivory. [REDACTED]

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-- In a 1984 interview with the Italian magazine EXPRESSO, UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi stated that the insurgent movement needed a minimum of \$30 million annually in external assistance and claimed \$85 million had been budgeted for 1984 by unspecified countries. [REDACTED]

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